

the smoke-filled living room of his apartment. In a chair in the corner, Sherry fed their baby a bottle. John admitted drinking a few beers that night and was ordered into alcohol counseling sessions, which he reluctantly attends.

John recently quit the chicken job again. He is working 20 hours a week for \$6.50 an hour at a Shell station in Gardner, 15 miles away.

As bad as things are now, some worry it could get worse in Athol. There are whispers about Starrett's moving south, like so many of the other factories that once made this a vibrant industrial center.

Douglas R. Starrett, the company's CEO, has heard the rumors and is the first to admit Athol would be "devastated" if his company left. Nonetheless, he offers no guarantees.

"I can't say we will never do anything, but we want to stay here," says Starrett, who is 76 and a lifelong resident. "A lot of people see a gritty mill town, but that is not what I see. It is a great place \* \* \* made on the wood stove."

One of her children jokes about being able to make "welfare casserole" again: macaroni and cheese, a can of tuna fish and cream of mushroom soup.

Although the family is not on welfare, they subsist entirely on government benefits and the generosity of local charities.

There is \$212 a month in food stamps, \$1,135 a month in disability payments, \$106 every other week in veterans' benefits, \$325 each winter in fuel assistance, and clothes and food baskets form the Clothing Collaborative in nearby Orange. All the children receive free or reduced-priced lunches at school.

Only one member of the family has health insurance and that is provided by the publicly funded MassHealth plan.

Cindy worked for a time last year as a store clerk in nearby Winchester, N.H., at \$6 an hour, but says she quit because her son was having problems at school.

The Sheffields are one of thousands of families barely surviving in the hill towns of Central and Western Massachusetts.

"People have no idea this town exists," Cindy says. "You say Warwick and they say, 'Warwick, Rhode Island?'"

Warick sits about five miles north of Route 2 between Athol and Greenfield. It is a town of fewer than 1,000 people with no industry. The only store in town recently went out of business.

The Sheffields live up a steep, dirt road in a house built by Cindy's husband, Bob, who collects disability payments for mental illness. The interior was never finished, and Cindy doubts they will ever have enough money to cover the plywood floors.

While the long country roads in Warwick recall another era, the scene inside Cindy's home is decidedly modern and chaotic.

Her oldest son, Donald, just had a baby with his 15-year-old girlfriend; all three are living in the home. There are Cindy's other children, a 10-year-old son and 12-year-old daughter, adding to the crunch as relatives from South Carolina, a family of six that has returned to Massachusetts to look for work and are staying with the Sheffields temporarily.

Every day begins early, with the children getting ready for school. The oldest are bused to Northfield, a trip that takes an hour each way.

At 10 a.m., Cindy bundles up the baby and walks her son, Ben Morin, to the elementary school nearly two miles away. Cindy recently bought a car, but has no money to register or insure it. At noon, the three of them make the return trip, either on foot or in the car of a school employee.

They walk because Ben is not allowed on the school bus and only allowed to attend a

special two-hour tutoring session in a room isolated from other students. The arrangement was made after he allegedly threatened to kill his teacher earlier in the year, a charge he and his mother deny.

There is a telephone in the Sheffield home, but it can't receive incoming calls and only toll-free and collect calls are possible when dialing out.

A shiny satellite dish stands out among the abandoned cars and furniture in the front yard. Cindy bought the dish after a cable company employee told her there was a "better chance of seeing Jesus Christ" than having cable installed in her area.

"We got to get something for the kids," she says. The Sheffields couldn't keep up the payments, however, and the satellite service was shut off.

Satellite dishes sprout like weeds in the yards of many of the poorest homes in this part of the state. It's one of the things social workers count on seeing when they visit.

Ray Burke, head of the westernmost office of the state Department of Social Services, says a former social worker who left to take a similar job in North Carolina explained there was only one difference between poor families in the two states.

In rural Massachusetts, every poor family has a satellite dish, TV and piles of cut wood. In North Carolina, every poor family has a satellite dish, TV and air conditioner.

#### SHOULD HAVE STAYED ON WELFARE

ORANGE.—Tina Jellison works the first shift at Catamount Manufacturing in this old mill town, stuffing plastic ties into boxes as they roll down an assembly line.

At \$6.83 an hour, it's a job that pays her only about \$50 a month more than what she received on welfare three years ago. The paycheck is not nearly enough to pay off her debts and keep up with the rent and never-ending bills.

Tina is realistic about the chances of finding a higher paying job, so she turns to lady luck and the Massachusetts State Lottery for help. She is a self-described scratch ticket addict, looking for a big hit to turn around her life.

"I started playing lottery tickets because I was desperate to get out of the hole," she says. "I've never hit on scratch tickets and I've cut back lately."

Cutting back means spending \$25 instead of \$60 on payday for scratch tickets.

Tina, who lives in a second floor apartment in downtown Athol with her two sons, ages 10 and 12, is not the only one with lottery fever. In a town with one of the state's lowest median incomes, residents spent \$5.1 million on instant tickets alone in 1995.

Tina is struggling to hold onto her job. Her two sons are frequently in trouble with the police and forced to skip school to attend hearings at the Orange courthouse. A single mother, she never misses a court hearing or school meeting. It also means a lot of missed workdays.

Then there is her car, an aging Chevy Citation with so many problems Tina is thankful for each day it gets her to work.

"I should have just stayed on welfare," she says.

But she plans to keep working, in part because new welfare rules will make it difficult to begin collecting again. As for those scratch tickets?

"I could get over the hump if I could just get over the scratch tickets," she says.

#### NEW WELFARE LAW HURTS MENTALLY DISABLED IMMIGRANTS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, under the new welfare law, many mentally

disabled legal immigrants will lose their SSI and AFDC benefits. As a result, some of these immigrants will be unable to pay their room and board at residential treatment facilities. They may be forced to live on the street, without enough money to buy their life-saving medication.

Two cases demonstrate this problem. In the first case, Mr. X, a former officer in the South Vietnamese army, came to the US as a refugee in 1991. As a result of 12 years on the front lines of the Vietnam War, and 10 years of torture in a re-education camp, he suffers from serious mental illness. At the age of 54, he is too old to start over, learn a new language, and hold down a job.

He receives treatment at a mental health center in California, and receives SSI. If his benefits are terminated, he will no longer have enough money to pay for his treatment. He is studying to pass the naturalization exam, but his memory impairment limits his ability to study.

In the second case, a refugee from Vietnam receiving SSI has been diagnosed with schizophrenia, and relies heavily on medication. Without it, he hears voices, and cannot concentrate, follow instructions, or remember anything he learned. He receives \$772 a month, of which \$692 goes for room and board at a residential facility. If his SSI benefits are cut off, he will be forced to leave the facility, and will be unable to pay for his medication.

Unless Congress takes action, these stories will continue, and immigrants who need help for serious mental disabilities will be turned away from their treatment centers and residential facilities. I ask unanimous consent that two recent newspaper articles on this issue may be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Miami Herald]

#### A CATASTROPHE AWAITS

In the rhetoric of Congress, welfare reform was to push the able-bodied off the dole and into the work place. In the reality of South Florida's legal immigrants—those who have met every legal test for being here, but who now are cruelly to the rejected—it bids to push the aged, the sick, and the disabled off their balance and into the street. Or the grave.

What awaits is a human tragedy. It is unwise, unfair, and manifestly un-American. It will be felt in South Florida as in few places in this, the nation made great by immigrants.

Maria Cristina Rodriguez is 76 and a social worker at the Little Havana Activities and Nutrition Center. She now runs six support groups for anxious seniors. She can't forget the 79-year-old woman who—as talk of benefits cuts rolled radio waves last year—jumped to her death from her subsidized apartment. "Here I finish," said her suicide note, "before they finish me."

Now the final countdown has started, and this kind of panic is spreading. One day recently, 500 distressed seniors waited for the local office of U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Miami, to open. There they sought succor. But little was to be had, Congress had spoken.

Social-service agencies already are feeling the rising tide of dread and demand. At the Little Havana Center, two 80-year-old women walked in with a written suicide pact. With no family to turn to, and facing loss of their Supplemental Security Income—their sole means of living—they thought it best to kill themselves. Heed that, Congress.

Would that this panic were overblown. It is not. Thanks to last year's welfare-reform law, legal immigrants who are destitute, sick, or aged will lose their federal assistance beginning in August. Florida expects 115,000 immigrants to lose life-sustaining benefits, principally food stamps and SSI.

The numbers in Dade are particularly frightening. Here, if nothing is done, 80,000 legal immigrants—nearly twice the number of Dade's U.S.-citizen "welfare moms" who'll lose benefits in the next two years—will lose their life-line support. That 80,000 includes more than 40,000 who get SSI—the cash aid for the most poor, aged, and disabled.

The new welfare law did make some exceptions. Immigrants who worked in the United States 10 years, were veterans of the nation's armed forces, or who were admitted as refugees or granted asylum may remain eligible for aid. For most legal immigrants, though only citizenship offers a safety net.

What the welfare law did not provide was any assistance for those immigrants too old and infirm to document their work history or other eligibility criteria. Not did it provide for those already in the naturalization process. Nor did it allow for those who, because of mental disability, are not legally competent to take the citizenship oath. In this saddest of categories, at least 5,000 immigrants will lose benefits in Dade and Broward, says the Alliance for Aging, which administers federal funds to 30 local agencies.

U.S.-citizen Floridians transitioning from welfare to work are getting two years and job training before their aid is cut. In that light, the transition time offered legal immigrants—a scant one year—its pathetic. It comes at a time when the Miami Immigration and Naturalization Service office has 90,000 cases to process, and becoming a citizen can easily take 10 to 13 months. So even if the INS adds 70 new employees to process applications—a plan announced this week—some legal immigrants could lose months of vital benefits before becoming citizens and having their eligibility restored.

Picture Dade (and to a lesser extent Broward) after August. Elderly legal immigrants evicted and homeless. Anxiety-provoked deaths and disease. Overwhelmed families and social-services agencies. For the economy, the loss of \$200 to \$300 million annually. It is a book of tragedy waiting to be written not in chapters, but in paragraphs—each representing a single, undeserved, preventable human tragedy.

Many Floridians express concern, but few so far have taken meaningful action. Some legislators have been searching for solutions in Tallahassee and Washington. Governor Chiles has been pressing for federal fixes as well. Area agencies are cooperating in trying to think the unthinkable. Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami, for one, has been trying to raise funds for a massive naturalization and immigrant-assistance drive.

Yet, altogether, inexplicably, with five months to go, south Florida remains woefully undermobilized. (By comparison, Los Angeles County, Calif. organized 200 agencies and started a massive naturalization drive last October.)

Unless superhuman efforts begin now, there won't be enough time to avert the human carnage.

[From the Salt Lake Tribune, Jan. 27, 1997]

AFTER DECADES, UNCLE SAM TELLS ELDERLY NONCITIZENS WE WON'T HELP YOU ANYMORE: UNCLE SAM ROLLING UP WELCOME MAT

(By Patty Henetz)

Federal lawmakers meant to be absolutely clear when they ordered the end of public assistance to legal immigrants in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996.

Just look at the bill's name. If questions remain, its backers will spell it out: Come to America. But never forget you are a guest and must pull your own weight.

Rose Boyer assumed that responsibility when she emigrated here from Lebanon 76 years ago. But the 92-year-old widow, who has been in nursing homes for the past 30 years, can't speak for herself because she has no idea what is going on around here.

Which may be just as well, since the letter she received from the state the first week of December would have been incomprehensible even if she did not suffer from dementia.

The letter said her medical-assistance case would be closed as of Dec. 31, 1996. Under new federal regulations, she is not qualified to receive Medicaid benefits. The \$2,700 her nursing home received each month for her care would cease. Incredibly, the government appeared to be telling her it was time she quit shirking her responsibilities.

At the same time, state Humane Services Director Robin Arnold-Williams alerted Gov. Mike Leavitt that Boyer was likely to lose her aid, as could several others. The governor vowed to protect her—at least until August. "He isn't going to kick people out on the street because there was a line in the regulation that said we had to," says Leavitt spokeswoman Vicki Varela.

So now, no legal immigrants will lose their Medicaid protections. And if Leavitt, state humane services officials, the immigrants' families and friends have their way, no one will—even though on its face the federal law would have done it otherwise.

Rose Boyer's husband was naturalized in 1939 and died in 1946. She reared nine children, all U.S. citizens. She has outlived one of them. Her youngest living child, Sandy resident Louis Boyer, is 59. Her oldest son is retired and ill; another lives on his Social Security payment of \$500 per month. The other three sons have diabetes. One has lost two legs, another has lost one leg, and all three were blinded by their disease. One daughter is a retired maid who can't walk much anymore; the other daughter, a 61-year-old clerical worker who wants to retire, also has difficulty walking.

Louis Boyer helps out the five siblings who live in Utah.

"I try to do what I can," he says. "I could pay for her keep, but then I would be in trouble. Our family has a lot of problems, but so far our mother is the only one on welfare. It was a big shock to me when they said they were going to kick her out."

Kris Mosley, Murray Care Center's social worker, was beyond shock. "I was furious," she says. "I was screaming mad. Who would want to discharge this little lady who can't walk, can't talk, who can barely feed herself?"

It may be difficult for affected families to take much comfort in this, but Utah is getting off easy. The federal welfare cuts are hammering more populous states, particularly those on the coasts.

Nationwide, 250,000 elderly immigrants are expected to lose their food-stamp allotments. About 500,000 legal noncitizens, the vast majority of them elderly, will lose their Supplemental Security Income benefits. SSI is paid to qualified people with severe dis-

abilities. In California alone, about 390,000 of the 2.7 million on Aid to Families with Dependent Children are legal noncitizens.

Utah officials are optimistic that few residents here will be hurt by the new restrictions because the state can decide whether to continue some benefits. Leaders are working to avoid harming noncitizens who are in the country legally, especially the most vulnerable elders on Medicaid.

Last fall, the Utah departments of Health and Human Services surveyed the rolls of legal noncitizens receiving Medicaid and found that as many as 250 could be in jeopardy. They examined ways to keep from cutting benefits and reduced that list to 10 names. Further culling left only three people ineligible for Medicaid, says Michael Diely, director of the state Health Department's division of health-care financing. Two are in nursing homes, one is at the state training center.

Legal noncitizens who receive food stamps will lose that benefit April 1, and the state is not allowed to do anything to continue it. Some 1,900 Utah legal noncitizens receiving SSI are now under review; because SSI eligibility requirements have become increasingly strict under the reforms, hundreds stand to lose their disability pay.

The Utah Legislature this session will consider a bill, the Family Employment Program Bill, sponsored by Rep. Lloyd Frandsen, R-South Jordan, that could provide noncitizen legal residents with cash payments. And Leavitt has been asked to take part in related negotiations with federal leaders during the National Governors Association meeting next month.

"The whole issue of having a handful of people that we need to take care of and the possibility of more down the road demonstrates the need for more flexibility from the federal government," Varela says.

Many of the people affected by the reforms are noncitizens who have not bothered to become naturalized. They are known as PRUCOLS, or people residing in the country under color of law. The Immigration and Naturalization Service knows and has known they are here, but has made no move to deport them. This group includes those who came to the country on temporary or student visas and never left. They work here, have families and pay taxes, have stayed beyond their legal limit but have not been deemed illegal. Many of them are old, and now, most of them are scared.

Lorena Rizzo, who heads the state Office of Hispanic Affairs, says she is working with the federal Immigration and Naturalization Service to assist the many older legal noncitizens who have applied for citizenship since the federal reforms were enacted. It may be possible, she says, to allow people older than 65 to take the citizenship exam in their native languages and in senior centers instead of INS offices, which could quell anxieties.

These measures won't help people who are incapable of becoming citizens, such as Rose Boyer and Lia Andrienko.

Andrienko's husband was one of the millions killed during the Stalinist purges in the old Soviet Union. After her husband was killed in 1938, she was ordered to leave Kiev or risk death for having married an enemy of the state. Her daughter was 1 year old. For most of her life, Mila Andrienko, now Popova, kept her father's history a fearful secret.

In 1989, when it was possible, Mila and her husband, Oleg, left Ukraine for the United States. Mila, who had been a physician, now works as a medical assistant. Oleg, formerly a civil engineer, delivers newspapers. In 1991, they sent for Lia, who was 82 and without other family. She became ill with dementia

soon afterward. She would not sleep at night; her daughter and son-in-law, who worked all day, stayed awake while Lia roamed the house sobbing and tearing her clothes. "For three years, I did not sleep," says Popova. "She did awful things at night. I do not know why I didn't give her pills."

Finally, the Popova asked the state for help. Andrienko went on Medicaid and moved into the Murray Care Center, where Rose Boyer also lives. And like Rose Boyer, Andrienko got a letter in December telling her—though she could not understand—that her time on American medical assistance had run out.

"When I received this letter, I cried," says Popova. "What will I do? I cannot leave my job to care for her. And Kris (Mosley) said 'We will fight. We will fight.'"

Social worker Mosley has been fighting since the letters came. The promise Leavitt made to protect the three legal noncitizens who otherwise would lose their Medicaid is good until August. Mosley is on an ad hoc committee trying to figure out how to extend the protection. "One answer is to go through the department process, with an attorney," she says. A judge could find it absurd to send Rose Boyer back to Lebanon more than seven decades after she left and issue a 'suspension of deportation,' which would allow her to stay on Medicaid. Lia Andrienko could apply for political asylum, but probably wouldn't get it, leaving the Popovas to pay for care they simply cannot afford.

"Their answer is not a pretty one," Mosley says. "Under all the guidelines, no matter what piece of paperwork I fill out, I cannot change their alien status."

Naturally, Louis Boyer is worried. "My mother needs 24-hour care. I wouldn't be able to take care of her," he says. "I don't know why she never became a citizen. She went to school here, but never finished her education because she was barefoot and pregnant for so many years. She must have figured that with her husband and her children all citizens, it was no big deal. She entered the country legally, but she never had a green card. She has a Social Security card, given to her in 1972."

Popova doesn't know what is going to happen with her mother. She certainly can't go back to Ukraine. For now, Popova consoles herself with her sense of gratitude and good luck at being in the United States.

"Every time I am in the nursing home, I say, 'Bless America. Bless these people,'" she says. "I am happy because my family is happy here. I am an American."

#### SPONSORSHIP STUDY SHOWS DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF IMMIGRATION LAW

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, a soon-to-be-released study commissioned by the Immigration and Naturalization Service shows that the immigration law Congress passed last year will have a devastating impact on family reunification—especially for working families.

Members of Congress may think they voted last year to put aside proposals to reduce legal immigration. But in fact, as this new study shows, last year's bill may have accomplished back door cuts that could not have been achieved through the front door. The onerous new sponsorship requirements are likely to cause a one-third reduction in the number of immigrants entering the United States to join close family members here.

The new law requires immigrants and US citizens seeking to bring immigrant relatives to the US to meet strict income requirements. Anyone sponsoring an immigrant relative for admission to the US must earn at least 125% of the poverty level. For a family of four, 125% of the poverty level is more than \$20,000 per year.

The INS study examined sponsorship patterns under the old law, and found that 29% of family sponsors had incomes below 125% of poverty. That means 3 out of every 10 families who came here in recent years probably could not have been reunited with family members under the new 125% rule. In addition, 52% of immigrants who sponsored their spouses did not meet the 125% income threshold. In other words, over half of all immigrants who brought in husbands or wives—the closest of all family members—would be disqualified if they tried to bring them in today.

In addition, according to the study, 29% of American citizens who sponsored their spouses earn below the 125% level. That's 3 out of every 10 American citizen sponsors who could not be reunited with their spouses under the new law.

The new requirement hurts both working American families and legal immigrants. As a result, large numbers of them cannot reunite with their loved ones. The new threshold means that the average construction workers with two children could not sponsor their immigrant spouse.

We are talking about hard-working Americans and legal immigrants—people who have played by the rules. I doubt that anyone in this Congress wants to deny American citizens the opportunity to bring their spouse to America or watch their children grow up here. But, that is what the 125% requirement does. It denies hard-working Americans these opportunities because the full time job they hold doesn't pay enough.

Supporters of the new requirement claim that the income requirement is intended to keep immigrants off welfare. But in reality, after last year's sweeping welfare reforms, there is very little public assistance for which legal immigrants qualify. They are banned from receiving SSI and Food Stamps until they have worked and paid taxes for 10 years—or until they become citizens. They are banned from Medicaid and other needs-based programs for their first five years in the United States, after which they receive assistance only if their sponsors are unable to provide for them. So even if their sponsors have only modest incomes, the immigrants they sponsor are ineligible for public aid.

I supported measure to make sponsors more responsible for the care of the immigrants they bring in. But these requirements should not be so burdensome that they prevent American citizens from having their wives or husbands or children join them in the United States.

We expect sponsors to be responsible—far more responsible than we expect ordinary Americans to be. We expect sponsors to do it all—pursue the American dream, hold a good job, and under the new law, hold a better job than almost a third of American citizens. The 125% requirement contained in the new immigration law puts family reunification out of reach for many hard-working Americans and the majority of legal immigrants.

In addition, the study found that the 125% requirement disproportionately affects minority communities. Half of the immigrants coming from Mexico and El Salvador had sponsors who earned less than 125% of the poverty level. The same was true for a third of immigrants coming from Korea and the Dominican Republic, and a fourth of immigrants coming from China and Jamaica. So, future immigrants from these countries will have unfair difficulty reuniting with their families in the United States.

Supporters of the 125% requirement often point out that the new law allows low income sponsors to overcome the 125% hurdle by lining up backup sponsors. What they fail to say, however, is that low-income, working class sponsors usually have low-income, working class friends. As a result, it is extremely difficult to find back up sponsors with income sufficient to meet the 125% requirement.

In addition, because the new law makes sponsorship agreements legally binding contracts, non-family members are unlikely to agree to sponsorship. Friends and family know that if they agree to sponsor an immigrant, they can be sued by the federal, state, or local government if the immigrant needs public assistance. If the immigrant they sponsor is injured on the job and needs medical care, the back-up sponsor may have to pay thousands of dollars in medical bills. Many families are not willing to ask their friends and other relatives to shoulder such a heavy burden.

I hope that all of us in this Congress who are concerned about families in the immigration laws will work together to revise these harsh provisions. There is no justification for this blatant kind of bias in the immigration laws, and Congress has an obligation to end it.

I ask unanimous consent that a recent article from the New York Times on this new study be printed at this point in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Mar. 16, 1997]  
IMMIGRANT STUDY FINDS MANY BELOW NEW  
INCOME LIMIT

(By Celia W. Dugger)

A new Federal analysis has found that an immigration law adopted last fall will make it much more difficult for poor and working-class immigrants to bring family members to the United States legally, especially Mexicans and Salvadorans, whose incomes